

To the Honorable Senator Winfield, the Honorable Representative Stafstrom, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing as the Senior Minister of Immanuel Congregational Church in Hartford, and as a person passionate about social justice. I am also a member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA).

I am writing **in support of raised Senate Bill 1019**, *An Act Concerning The Board Of Pardons And Paroles, Erasure Of Criminal Records For Certain Misdemeanor And Felony Offenses, Prohibiting Discrimination Based On Erased Criminal History Record Information And Concerning The Recommendations Of The Connecticut Sentencing Commission With Respect To Misdemeanor Sentences*. I believe that it is vital that people be given a second chance to succeed in society, and the Clean Slate Bill 1019 offers our citizens that opportunity: As a clergy person, and a faith leader, I know that every person makes mistakes, and that we are not defined by the worst choices that we make. In fact, all human beings have the potential to learn from their history, and to create new, life-giving, community building futures. Senate Bill 1019 offers people that opportunity, and will not only be good for those it impacts, it will benefit our whole society. When people have the chance to succeed, *it is good for us all*.

One member of our congregation was convicted of a crime three years ago. He had been in the wrong place at the wrong time, and he made a poor choice. There were drugs involved, and he ended up in prison. I visited him regularly, and he served his time with no incidents. He was released, and is trying so hard to rebuild his life. However, his criminal record has put many barriers up for him. He has a beautiful son, who he loves very much, but he is struggling to support his son, because it is so difficult for him to find employment. This legislation would allow him access to jobs and housing, so that he can be not only a good citizen, but also a good father.

People who go to prison don't deserve to be punished for the rest of their lives. A 2019 study found that those who have had their records expunged saw a 25% pay increase in just two years. Another study in California found that after record expungement, the net benefits totaled \$5,760 per recipient per year. People who remain crime free for three to four years after a nonviolent conviction are no more likely to recidivate than the general population is to be arrested.

For all these reasons, and many more, I **strongly support** Senate Bill 1019. It is the right thing to do and it is the smart thing to do. For the sake of our member and his son, for the sake of returning citizens, and for the sake of our whole society.

Sincerely,
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